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PastWatch - August 1993

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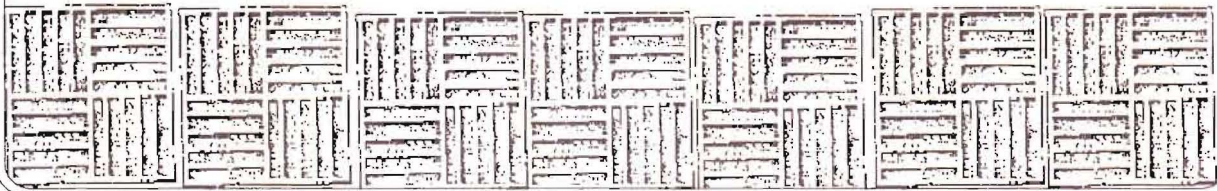
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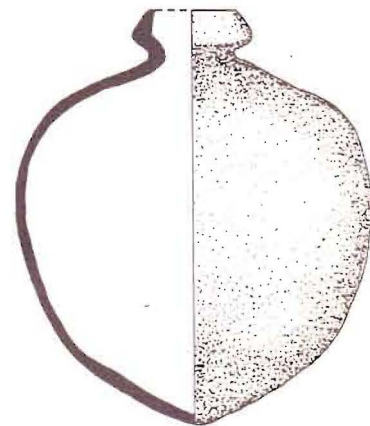
PastWatch



Volume Two, Number Two, August 1993. Occasional Newsletter of the Archaeological Research Trust of The South Carolina Institute of Archaeology & Anthropology, University of South Carolina



Stanley South in Santa Elena Pottery Kiln



CM 10
IN 4

Middle Style Olive Jar from Santa Elena

NEW DISCOVERIES AT SANTA ELENA: 1993 FIELD SEASON!

By Chester DePratter and Stanley South

What an exciting 1993 field season at Santa Elena! We looked for the first town, we excavated a well, we looked for a missing fort, and we uncovered what is, perhaps, the most exciting feature so far discovered at Santa Elena. Approximately 50 of you took the ART-sponsored bus tour of the site on May 13, 1993, and you got a first-hand view of these exciting finds. But, we're getting ahead of our story, so let's go back to the beginning.

In the last issue of *PastWatch*, Chester DePratter described plans to search for the first Spanish town on the site; that search was initiated in early April. Test excavations to the north of most of our previous work revealed

only limited amounts of Spanish material. The presence of a town in that location now seems unlikely, although recovered artifacts indicate that there must have been isolated houses or out-buildings on this high bluff overlooking the creek.

In the town proper, we opened another large excavation block measuring 50 feet by 70 feet. This block included the well shaft from which a barrel was removed in 1981, and we hoped to uncover the building or buildings associated with this well. We found several postholes, daub processing pits, and a number of other features in the block unit, but we did not find a clearly defined structure of the sort that we uncovered in 1991 and 1992. We did find another

well, however. This new well was located adjacent to the 1981 well, and one was probably the replacement well for the other, although at this time we do not know which well was used first.

The newly discovered well was excavated using SCIAA's new well pointsystem in conjunction with a larger, more powerful system provided by the Marines. About four feet below the surface we hit a rusted barrel-band; and as we continued down within the well shaft, we eventually uncovered the remains of a well-preserved barrel four feet tall. Contents of one-half of this barrel were excavated, and in the fill we found several pieces of wood, gourd fragments, and pieces of palmetto fronds. In addition, we recovered a

Santa Elena Kiln *Continued on Page 2*

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

The most important thing the readership of *PastWatch* can do is to increase y our participation, sponsorship, and assistance in archaeological research at the Institute. Now is the time to get involved in the many Institute projects, activities, and special missions that are on-going throughout the year. If you have not contributed to the ART in 1993, please consider making a special donation today.

Roland C. Young
Chairman

PastWatch, published four times a year, is the newsletter of the Archaeological Research Trust, SC Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina

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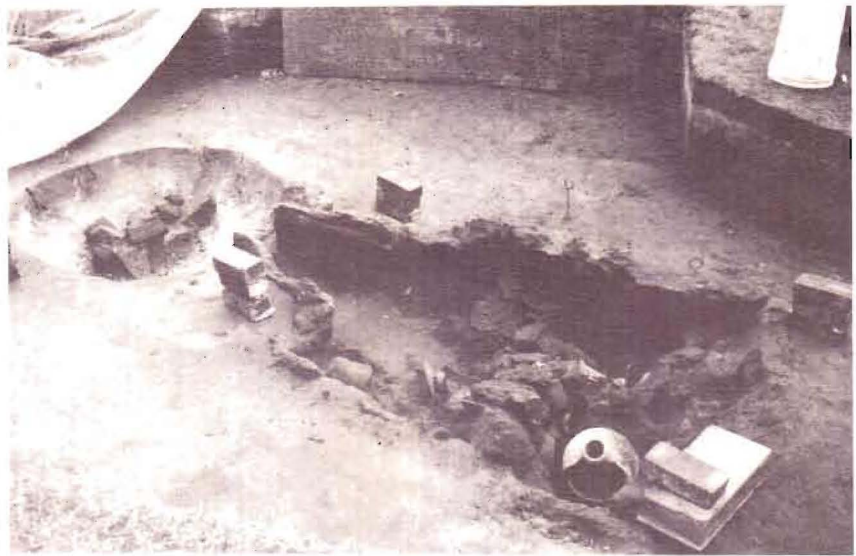
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Spanish Pottery Kiln During Excavation

Santa Elena Kiln Continued

large number of seeds and insects (both whole specimens and fragments) from the lowest levels within the barrel.

Excavations were also conducted this year near the golf course clubhouse in an area not previously tested. The search in this area resulted from a re-evaluation of Santa Elena's forts and the names that have been applied to them since 1979. As many of you know, we have been involved in the search for French Charlesfort (occupied 1562-1563) since the early 1980s. In 1989, we excavated a backhoe trench along the eastern margin of Parris Island in search of this fort, but we failed to find any evidence of a French occupation.

In reviewing evidence concerning that search, we began considering the possibility that Charlesfort may be buried beneath the remains of Spanish Santa Elena. A careful reading of both French and Spanish accounts indicated that the fort that has been called Fort San Felipe II since its discovery in 1979, could, in fact, be Charlesfort. Its shape certainly fits what we know about Charlesfort, and its size is about right for a fortification meant to be defended by only 27 men. Further, many of the artifacts recovered during excavations in 1979-1982 had a French look and feel to them, but they were sorted into Spanish artifact types at that time, because the fort was thought to be Spanish. We intend to restudy this Fort San Felipe

artifact collection later this year to determine whether the artifacts are indeed French and whether the fort is in fact Charlesfort.

So, if Fort San Felipe II is possibly Charlesfort, then where is Fort San Felipe II? The only other fort so far found at Santa Elena has traditionally been called Fort San Marcos. Actually, it was identified as the French Charlesfort by a Marine Corps Major who excavated on the site in 1923, but that is a different story. Once again we turned to the documents, and we found that this fort, now called San Marcos, has a size and shape that is close to what we know of the fort that the Spanish called Fort San Felipe. If we then take this fort to be Fort San Felipe II, where is the real Fort San Marcos?

Again using documents and maps, we found that Fort San Marcos was probably located inland, several hundred feet from the present marsh edge. While this may at first seem an odd place to put a fort, we know from contemporary accounts that the Spanish were concerned about Indian attacks. Many of those attacks were staged from a low-lying area near where we now think that Fort San Marcos was located. It seems likely that when Fort San Marcos was built in 1577, it was situated in a location that would preclude devastating Indian attacks like the one that forced the abandonment of Fort San Felipe (and Santa Elena) in 1576.

Santa Elena Kiln Continued on Page 3

DIRECTOR'S VISTA
Bruce Rippeteau, Director and State Archaeologist
ART Board Member

Welcome to the third issue of **PastWatch!** **PastWatch** is the window on the productive archaeological research of the SC Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology. These research activities in part are sponsored by SCIAA's Archaeological Research Trust and provide ample evidence that the spirit of discovery is alive and well within our staff.

Without foreshadowing the articles herein, I have to emphasize the great success of our May 13, 1993 ART Tour to Santa Elena. What a great experience! A big thank you to all

involved from the Principal Investigators Stanley South and Chester DePratter to organizer Nena Powell. And the donors who went received a great benefit of education and travel, and were also fortunate enough to witness important archaeology in progress with a newly discovered very early New World Spanish pottery kiln.



ART Bus Tour to Santa Elena

Santa Elena Kiln *Continued*

When we measured inland from the marsh edge west to our proposed location for Fort San Marcos, we found that the existing golf clubhouse was sitting on, or very near, the spot in which we were interested. Beginning at a point halfway between the clubhouse and the marsh, we began digging a series of small test holes about one foot square to see if we could find evidence of the fort, or of any Spanish presence, in this area that had always been thought to be beyond the fringes of the town of Santa Elena. In the first two dozen holes, we found no Spanish artifacts, but when we reached the area adjacent to the clubhouse, we found Spanish material in nearly every test hole.

Only thirty feet from the clubhouse, in a test hole being excavated by crew member Patrice White and a volunteer from New Jersey, John O'Donnell-Rosales, we found low-fired lumps of clay that we at first thought were 19th century brick fragments. Associated with these lumps of clay, however, were several low-fired red-orange colored pottery sherds of Spanish origin. These sherds are of a type known as Orange Micaceous Ware due to the presence of small flecks of mica

included in the clay from which the pottery was made. At this point, we thought that we had found a clay daub-covered wall associated with Fort San Marcos.



Spanish Barrel in Well

We immediately opened up a ten foot square around our test hole, and we found that we had discovered a three foot wide daub-filled feature that extended beneath the profile at either end of the ten foot unit. This feature looked very wall-like, so we dug two additional ten foot squares in the expectation that we would thereby expose a full thirty feet of wall. We soon discovered that our "wall" extended only a short distance into each of the two new units.

We had found a four foot wide, eleven foot long feature containing large lumps of fired clay daub and a scattering of Spanish and Indian pottery.

Uncertain of exactly what we had found, we began our excavations by carefully defining the edges of the feature, and exposing the upper surface of the daub rubble pile. As we dug farther into the feature, we began finding larger sherds of pottery and large lumps of daub with smoothed surfaces and square corners. At one end, we found a circular pit with charcoal, fragments of daub that looked like bricks, and still more pottery. It was at this point that we realized what we had found.

We had found a pottery kiln, and from all of the available evidence it appeared to be a Spanish pottery kiln! While we had at first been disappointed that our feature was not a fortification wall, now we faced the exciting prospect of excavating a pottery kiln constructed more than 400 years ago. A quick survey of the literature and a few phone calls indicated that no such kiln had ever been uncovered at St. Augustine, Santa Elena's sister city, or indeed, anywhere else in the continental North America. The closest 16th century Span-

Santa Elena Kiln *Continued on Page 5*

1993 SOUTH CAROLINA ARCHAEOLOGY WEEK

By Nena Powell

During September 1993, the South Carolina archaeological community will again celebrate a series of statewide events designed to raise public awareness of the state's multi-cultural heritage and to enlist public support and participation in resource conservation. The **Second Annual SC Archaeology Week (SCAW)**, will be held on **September 25-October 2, 1993**, and will culminate at Santee State Park for the **Sixth Annual Archaeology Field Day on October 2**, sponsored by the Archaeological Society of South Carolina. The goal of the professional community of South Carolina is to promote archaeological education statewide in South Carolina.

The archaeological community of South Carolina consisting of state and federal agencies, libraries, museum, archaeological consulting firms, historic preservationists, and professional and avocational archaeologists has identified a need for an organized and comprehensive public outreach effort which provides a framework for regional and local public support for South Carolina's archaeological resources. Under the direction of State Archaeologist Bruce Rippeteau, Nena Powell has been appointed the statewide coordinator the SCAW event from the staff of the SCIAA and an Advisory Council and working committees have been busy now for several months.

The purpose of South Carolina Archaeology Week (SCAW) is to reach out to as many communities possible throughout South Carolina to provide archaeological programs, lectures, and exhibits; tours to visit sites and historic homes or plantations; tours of excavations in progress; demonstrations of how prehistoric Indian, protohistoric, and European and African-American artifacts are made and used; archaeological laboratory tours; and artifact

identification. The goals of the program are to: 1) stimulate public pride in our state's archaeological heritage, 2) increase public understanding of why archaeological research is important, 3) heighten public awareness of how many archaeological resources are lost each year in South Carolina, 4) educate the public about what they can do to help protect and study the state's archaeo-



Edisto Indian Dancers at Archaeology Field Day

logical resources, and 5) get more people involved in legitimate archaeological activities.

During the last month over 120 programs and exhibits have been coordinated for Archaeology Week involving over 75 organizations in over 40 locations throughout South Carolina. Within a month from now, all of you will receive a Calendar of Events booklet that will describe the programs in detail. This year a focus of Archaeology Week will be to celebrate African-American Archaeology. Through archaeology, much has been learned in recent years about the culture of African-Americans in South Carolina who came from Western Africa as far back as 300 years ago.

One of our premier programs this year will be the **South Carolina Archaeology Week Kick-Off Celebration**

which is planned for **Monday, September 27** on the front steps of the State Capitol Grounds from **11:00 am - 1:00 pm**. Activities at the Kick-Off Celebration will feature African-American archaeologist Teresa Singleton from the Smithsonian Institution (she is originally from South Carolina) as the Institute's guest speaker and will include the Governor's Proclamation, an appearance by the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Colored Troop Reenactment Regiment, dancers from the Catawba Indian Nation, demonstrations of stone tool technology and Native American Catawba pottery, and numerous archaeological exhibits and displays on current research in South Carolina archaeology. Other highlights during the day in Columbia will feature three separate tours of the Mann-Simons Cottage from 1:15-3:45 pm. At 6:00 pm, there will be a Kick-Off Reception at the SC State Museum featuring Ron and Natalie Daise, who will present "Sea Island Montage", a lecture/performance/slide show on Gullah culture. The presentation combines music, dance, and poetry into a compelling experience for audiences of all ages.

Another major event at the end of the week will be **Archaeology Field Day** at Santee State Park. Everyone is invited to learn about past cultures through primitive living skill demonstrations. Featured attractions include atlatl spear throwing, hide tanning, blow guns, Indian dances, stone tool making, firing of Catawba pottery, a New World Food Festival, indigo dying, basket making, storytelling, metal work, stone work, mat weaving, childrens games, artifact identification, videos, and reenactments by a Colored Troop Regiment. Tour many archaeological exhibits and feast on homemade barbeque while you listen to old time music and find special gifts at a fundraising auc-

Archaeology Week Continued on Page 8

ish kiln found by archaeologists is in Haiti.

Over the next four weeks, we carefully excavated the kiln. Removal of each layer of rubble revealed new surprises. The circular pit at the south end of the feature turned out to be the stoke pit in which the potter stood to shove logs into the firebox beneath the pot chamber. Connecting this stoke pit with the body of the kiln was a firebox with sides that diverged as the body of the kiln was approached. The pot chamber itself was about four feet square. Both the firebox and the pot chamber were constructed of locally made mud bricks cemented with a mortar made of local clay.

Our most exciting discovery was that the kiln had collapsed during the firing process, and it still contained the pottery that was being fired at the time of its collapse. Our excavations recovered literally hundreds of pottery fragments from perhaps three to four dozen wheel thrown pots in a wide variety of shapes including large basins, bowls, canteens, mugs, olive jars, and cooking pots. All had been broken in place by the collapse of the kiln or by the crushing weight of heavy equipment used by the Marines to prepare the ground for construction of the nearby golf clubhouse.

As we dug farther into the debris-filled kiln, we learned more about its construction and collapse. The en-

tire kiln and fire box had been constructed in an elongated trench eighteen inches deep. Within this trench, the walls of the kiln had been built of hand made bricks 10.5 inches long, 5.5 inches wide, and 2.5 inches thick. The sandy bottom of the trench served as the floor of the kiln.

Ashes and wood fragments were found resting in two layers on the pot chamber and firebox floors. The lower-most of these two layers contained no pottery fragments, and it appears that this layer of ash represents a test firing of the empty kiln intended to partially fire the brick walls and roof prior to placement of the first load of pots. A thin layer of clay dust on top of this lower ash layer suggests that there may have been some flaking of the bricks as they cooled, or perhaps minor repairs were made to the kiln after it cooled.

Once this initial test firing was completed and the kiln repaired, it was loaded with the pots described above. Given the number of pots and the size of the pot chamber, the various vessel forms must have been nested inside one another and stacked close together to fill all available space. Once again a fire was kindled, and before long the kiln walls must have glowed red with heat.

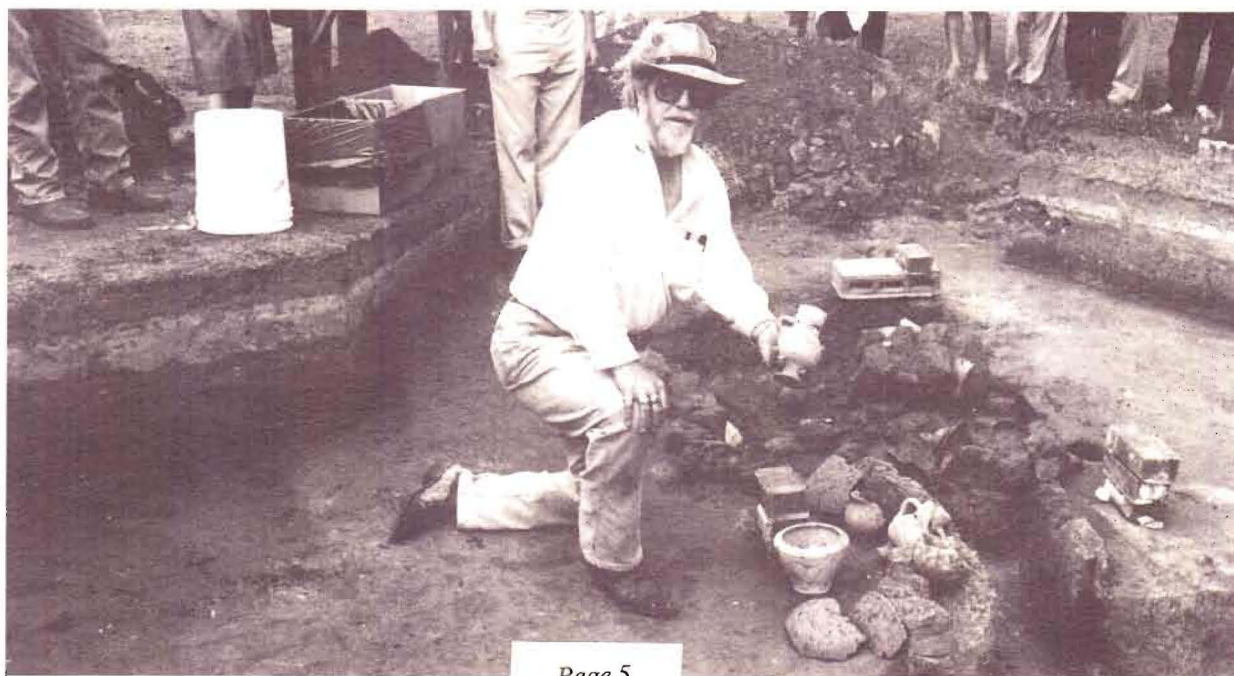
But then something catastrophic happened. The roof and walls of the kiln collapsed, crushing the pots inside. The ash layer from this firing is

filled with pottery fragments that fell into the ashes during the kiln's collapse. Pots that were not broken by falling debris must have cracked during the too rapid cooling that occurred when the chamber collapsed.

At some time after the kiln had cooled, someone dug through part of the brick debris and pottery fragments that now filled the lower half of the kiln. Bricks and broken pots were tossed into the stoke pit, and some fragments of large pots appear to have been removed at this time. This scavenging could have been done by the potter himself, checking to see if there were any salvageable pieces remaining. Or it could have been rummaged through years later by Indians searching for useable materials in the then abandoned town and forts of Santa Elena.

At present, the pottery from the kiln is being washed and catalogued. Once this process is completed, we can begin piecing together the thousands of fragments into the 3 to 4 dozen pots they represent. Ultimately, as funds become available, we will be able to study the rebuilt pots in order to gain a more complete understanding of the wares that the kiln contained. We will be interested in the range of vessel forms present, as well as the decoration contained on their surfaces. We will study the clay used to manufacture the pots to see if it was obtained from nearby tidal creeks or was brought to Santa Elena

Santa Elena Kiln Continued on Page 6



from elsewhere. We will compare the clay from the pots to the clay used to build the kiln to see if they are from the same source. We will have experts look at the charred wood fragments from the kiln floor to determine the types of wood used in firing. And, finally, we are working with Colin Brooker, a Beaufort architect, to develop drawings of the kiln as it looked before the collapse.

In the coming year, as we piece together the information from the kiln,

we will learn a great deal about a potter and his wares, about a catastrophe that occurred over four hundred years ago in a tiny Spanish outpost on the very edge of a vast colonial empire. We will use the broken pots, the low-fired brick, and our notes and photographs of the excavations to gradually develop a snapshot-like view of a single moment in time.

We also intend to return to Parris Island in Fall 1993 to continue

our search around the clubhouse for Fort San Marcos. This project will involve the excavation of several ten foot squares at points where we recovered Spanish artifacts in shovel tests this Spring. We should be able to locate this long lost fort if it is indeed buried beneath the golf course clubhouse. The coming year will truly be an exciting one, and we look forward to sharing the results of our labors with you.

ANNOUNCING NEW PUBLICATIONS BY SCIAA STAFF!

WHOM WE WOULD NEVER MORE SEE:

HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY RECOVER THE LIVES AND DEATHS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS ON FOLLY ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA

By Steven D. Smith

**South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology
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Four days before the Christmas of 1863, Private William Herbert of the 55th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry died of typhoid and was buried on Folly Island, South Carolina, 1070 miles from his snow-covered home in Nova Scotia. This is the story of his final year of life as a soldier, his rediscovery by archaeologists, and his eventual reburial with at least seventeen fellow soldiers in Beaufort National Cemetery. \$6.75 postpaid (SC residents add 5% sales tax).

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EARLY POTTERY IN THE SOUTHEAST:

TRADITION AND INNOVATION IN COOKING TECHNOLOGY

By Kenneth E. Sassaman

**South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology
University of South Carolina**

Sassaman's book questions the value of using technological traits alone to mark temporal and spatial boundaries of prehistoric cultures and shows how social process shapes the prehistoric archaeological record. \$30.95.

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Chester DePratter Displaying Reconstructed Spanish Pots



D. ERD

ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD DAY - OCTOBER 2, 1993 REGISTRATION

REGISTRATION FOR BARBEQUE

(\$7.00 12 years and older, \$3.00 ages 6-12, under 6 free)

Print Name(s) and Address

**PLEASE MAIL WITH CHECK PAYABLE TO: (ASSC)
BY SEPTEMBER 27, 1993:**

TO: Al Goodyear, ASSC
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University of South Carolina
1321 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29208
(803) 777-8170

Archaeology Week Continued

tion. Archaeologist David Anderson (National Park Service) will give a talk on the Santee Indian Mound in the late afternoon before the barbeque. Pay admission of \$5/adult, \$2/child, \$1/school and scout groups at the gate, and pick up a schedule of events at the information booth. Evening BBQ meal tickets are \$7/adult, \$3/child. (Admission and barbeque **FREE** for children under 6.) **Meal tickets for the barbeque MUST be purchased in advance.** Activities on Saturday begin at 9 AM until 9 PM. Camping is available Friday and Saturday nights: tent camping

\$.50/person, hookup \$12/vehicle. Bring a lawn chair and/or blankets and your favorite artifacts for identification.

DON'T MISS THIS OUTSTANDING ANNUAL EVENT!

For further information, please contact Nena Powell, SC Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina, 1321 Pendleton Street, Columbia, SC 29208 (803) 734-0567 or 777-8170.



Archaeology Field Day

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